

Internet governance hui

Tuesday 26 August 2008, 15:15 – 17:30

- Webcast live on the Internet
- Archived transcripts, videos and presentation files available at:

<http://www.apnic.net/meetings/26/program/hui>

Major outcomes

The Internet Governance Forum (IGF) was demystified and all meeting participants were invited to join the IGF in Hyderabad, India in December 2008. The Hyderabad IGF will be the first IGF to be held in the Asia Pacific.

The main component of the hui (“gathering” in Maori) was devoted to “Challenges facing Internet operators in developing countries”, an initial exploration of the issues to be discussed in a workshop of the same name organized by APNIC and others to be held during IGF in Hyderabad. The outcomes of the APNIC 26 hui will serve as a basis for the discussions in the IGF workshop. In the APNIC 26 session, the panellists identified the following key challenges facing network operators:

- Geography (sparse populations over large areas, mountainous terrain)
- Finances (grass roots projects, cost of importing technical equipment)
- Human resources (educating operators, skilled operators leaving developing countries for well-paid jobs in developed countries)
- Regulatory (access to wireless bandwidth, VOIP restrictions)
- Bureaucratic (need to get approval from authorities at many stages, need to apply to funding agencies)
- Expensive use and misuse of bandwidth (spam, peer-to-peer traffic)

Solutions to these challenges that had been used or observed by the hui panellists included:

- Deployment of wireless rather than wired networks
- Use of alternative transport (such as elephants through thickly forested land)
- Use and repurposing of available lower-tech general equipment rather than expensive single-purpose equipment
- Use of alternative power sources (such as solar panels) to make infrastructure self-sufficient
- Including staff who can write effective funding proposals
- Encouraging meetings, conferences and training events in developing countries to inspire and help build capacity in those countries



Summaries of presentations

The Internet governance hui focused on three main areas:

- Internet governance perspectives in New Zealand
- The Internet Governance Forum
- Challenges facing Internet operators in developing countries

Frank March

Senior Specialist Advisor in the Digital Development Group of the Ministry of Economic Development, New Zealand

Frank March explained that the New Zealand government took a hands-off view of Internet governance and, on the whole, had adopted a technology neutral legal framework. He also discussed the role of the GAC (Government Advisory Committee) within the ICANN structure.

Rajnish Singh

Regional Manager for South and Southeast Asia, ISOC, Fiji

Rajnish Singh explained that Internet governance was of importance because the Internet is the major communications media for a large part of the world and the Internet forms a significant portion of the global economy. He explained that ISOC had identified three key strategic challenges that will form the focus of ISOC's activities from now until 2010: enabling access; internetworks; and, trust and identity.

Raul Echeberria

IGF MAG (Multistakeholder Advisory Group) and Executive Director of LACNIC, Uruguay

Raul Echeberria explained the background to the creation of the IGF and how the MAG functioned. He noted that while the multistakeholder model was a challenge for many of the stakeholders in Internet governance, the level and quality of collaboration had increased markedly since the beginning of the WSIS (World Summit on the Information Society) process in 2003.

Tulika Pandey

Director with the Department of Information Technology, Ministry of Communications & Information Technology, India

Tulika Pandey invited all APNIC 26 attendees to participate in IGF in Hyderabad in December 2008. She reported in the status of the Internet industry in India and India's efforts to provide access to IT to all its citizens, overcoming challenges posed by language, large geographic area and population density.

Kanchana Kanachanawit

Director of Internet Education and Research Laboratory at the Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand

Kanchana Kanachanawit joined the hui via videoconference to report on how Project DUMBO (Digital Ubiquitous Mobile Broadband OLSR). Project DUMBO is designed to provide ad-hoc wireless networks that can provide vital communications during disaster recovery efforts after events such as earthquakes and cyclones. To cater for any damage to wired communication infrastructure the project relies on wireless networking. To cope with damaged transport networks, Project DUMBO has tested using elephants to transport the networking equipment over rough terrain. Because of the need to quickly deploy networks, the project uses readily available end user devices such as laptops, PCs and PDAs, rather than specialist equipment. In May 2008, when DUMBO was deployed to provide Internet communications in Myanmar after Cyclone Nargis, the project also had to overcome challenges related to bandwidth limitations, government restrictions on wireless frequencies and battery life of laptops in the field and the need to quickly train volunteers on the ground in Myanmar. The continuing bad weather after Cyclone Nargis also hampered deployment efforts.

Fred Christopher

Manager of the Pacific Islands Telecommunications Association (PITA), Fiji

Fred Christopher discussed the challenges of providing access to the Internet within the Pacific Islands, with small islands dotted throughout the area's large geographic coverage. Both the large distances involved, and the often difficult terrain of the islands has made satellite technology an important way to provide Internet access. Last mile access has traditionally relied on wired infrastructure, but there is increasing use of wireless services. Power has also been a challenge, with initiatives to use solar energy to power Internet services. The problem of sinking islands is also obviously an issue, with infrastructure partially submerged in salt water some of the time. Bandwidth is an issue, with a large proportion of the bandwidth consumed by spam and, increasingly, peer-to-peer traffic. Additionally, as staff skill levels increase, they tend to go overseas for better job opportunities.

Sylvia Cadena

ISIF (Information Society Innovation Fund) Project Officer at APNIC, Australia

Sylvia Cadena spoke about her experiences in her previous job where she had helped provide Internet access wirelessly over the Andes mountains in Venezuela. She highlighted the need to translate technical information into the languages of the region as a way to help support better access. She also reported on the need for low-cost solutions, such as recycled antennas, to make access more affordable. She also explained that a problem experienced in South America was that equipment made in Asia could be cheap there, but expensive by the time it reached South America. Regulatory hurdles such as restrictions on use of wireless frequencies and VOIP (Voice over IP) also slow the deployment of infrastructure and how it can be used. She noted it's also important to have the writing and negotiation skills needed to apply for funding as well as the more traditional technical skills.

Don Hollander

General Manager of APTLD (Asia Pacific Top Level Domain Association), New Zealand

Don Hollander explained that in addition to using wireless and satellite, another solution used by a group in the Solomon Islands was email over short wave radio. He repeated Fred's comment that it was hard to keep skilled people in the Pacific. He noted the PIP (Pacific Internet Partners) program had been set up to help create skilled Internet operators in the Pacific and to help encourage such operators to remain in the Pacific. He also noted the importance of having meetings such as APNIC 26, PACNOG (Pacific Network Operators Group), and APRICOT travelling to developing economies to act as catalysts for further Internet development within the economies the meetings are held in.

Paul Wilson

APNIC Director General, Australia

Paul Wilson noted that there was still a lot of training and awareness building to be done and that providing the infrastructure for the 4 billion people in the world who currently do not have Internet access was a challenge. He also noted that the increasing rate of new technology developments also proved to be a challenge for network operators in developing economies. He reported on the activities APNIC was undertaking to support increased Internet access in developing economies, such as training and supporting DNS root server deployments.